

January 28, 2008

Mr. William J. Ricca,
Webmaster LVFC
P.O. Box 25
New Tripoli, PA 18066

Dear Mr. Ricca:

Please accept my deep apologies for not replying sooner to your letter dated October 23, 2007 in which you asked for my views on various gun control bills in the Legislature. I filed your letter in my political file for correspondence, and it became paper-clipped to other papers. I am sorry for not replying sooner, but hope you will understand the reason for the delay and accept my regrets for not responding sooner.

In terms of the concerns of the members of the LVFC, I am a strong supporter of Second Amendment rights and the Right to Keep and Bear Arms without question under the Pennsylvania Constitution. As a former prosecutor for twelve years both in Lehigh County and in Philadelphia, I can tell you from personal experience that placing more restrictions on the ability of law-abiding citizens to legally obtain firearms will not reduce violent crime in Pennsylvania. As long as people in certain communities are more willing to take the risk associated with committing a crime with a gun instead of obeying the law, we could pile new laws up to the ceiling of the Capitol without any effect on violent crime.

What needs to be done is to ensure that police, prosecutors, and judges have the necessary tools to arrest, prosecute, and sentence our most violent criminals to longer periods in prison. I have introduced legislation to increase the penalty against those who knowingly possess or deal in stolen firearms, from a felony of the third degree up to a felony of the second degree. This would increase the maximum penalty for such a crime up to ten years in state prison.

I am also a supporter of the Castle Doctrine legislation introduced in the House by Rep. Cappelli. Although I believe our current statutory and caselaw adequately sets forth the circumstances under which you may resort to deadly force to protect yourself or others, I feel the protection against frivolous litigation in the bill would be an improvement. Such an amendment to our statutes would prevent someone who broke the law and threatened an individual from suing that same person who felt it reasonably necessary to use deadly force.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my views on these important self-protection issues. I do apologize again for not replying sooner, and hope you will feel free to contact me if I can be of any further assistance or clarification.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS G. REICHLEY
State Representative, 134th District